

benefit other border states, such as Alaska, Washington, Montana, North Dakota, and Maine. In addition, we have included S. 900, Senator MCCAIN's Television Information Enhancement for the visually impaired act which Senator INOUE and I cosponsored, along with Senator SMITH. That bill authorizes an existing FCC rule requiring TV stations to offer some video description of television shows so blind listeners will be able to follow the action. The existing rule was struck down by the courts on the grounds that the FCC lacked authority for such a rule. Today we provide them the authority they need. As the son of a father who was blind for a period of time, this is an issue of personal interest to me.

Last, but most important to me is universal service reform. Our measure is based on a series of bills. The contribution mechanism we adopted is based on S. 2256, the Burns USF bill and S. 1583, the Smith-Dorgan measure which was also cosponsored by Senator PRYOR. It allows the FCC to adopt a contribution mechanism based on revenues, numbers, or connections. Such a step is needed to stabilize this important program. It also includes Senator SMITH's concept of a separate broadband fund to address the needs of unserved areas.

We have included S. 241, the Snowe-Rockefeller ADA exemption after failing in our efforts to work out this issue with the Administration. While the Burns and Smith-Dorgan-Pryor bills were the basis for our USF title, we also used important concepts from H.R. 5072, the Terry-Boucher bill, and we applaud them for their leadership in the House and thank them for their contribution to this effort. Lastly, we have included S. 2378, the Inouye measure that will improve the e-rate program for Native Americans. Senators MCCAIN, DORGAN, and I joined in cosponsoring that bill.

This bill includes provisions throughout that will benefit consumers. It encourages competition and cost savings in the video market. It addresses some critical needs in rural America. And, it encourages deployment of broadband so that our Nation can remain competitive.

This is a comprehensive bill, as indicated by my comments, that we have researched. The bill is introduced by every Member of the Senate. We are attempting to collate them so we can have one communications act for this year. This will be the Communications Act of 2006.

I urge the Senate to review it. We look forward to having their comments.

Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, today, I have agreed to cosponsor telecommunications legislation introduced by Senator STEVENS. I do so in a spirit of bipartisanship because I believe that bipartisanship will be required if we are to successfully update our Nation's communications laws. My cosponsor-

ship, however, is not a demonstration of support for the bill itself.

This is the draft of the majority staff, and I have numerous, substantive objections to the bill in its current form. Given that my colleagues and I have not yet had an opportunity to weigh in on this critical legislation, I consider its introduction the very beginning of the legislative process.

Now that the majority staff's draft is no longer a secret, we can begin a full review of the bill and address the many issues important to me and my colleagues. At first glance, some provisions will need to be deleted or changed substantially and some issues still need to be addressed.

For example, we cannot ignore concerns about the potential for discrimination by network operators, but the draft appears to do just that by failing to create enforceable protections that will ensure network neutrality. Similarly, I believe that the provisions addressing video franchise reform must follow more closely the principles Senator BURNS and I offered earlier this year. At a time of increasing consolidation in the communications industry, it is essential that we guarantee rights of interconnection, promote competition, and restrain anticompetitive behavior, particularly in markets where the Bell Companies continue to have significant market power. The legislation must promote the availability of affordable, broadband services and extend consumer protections on a competitively neutral basis.

Again, I recognize and honor the chairman's prerogative to set this legislative process into motion. The chairman is aware of my many concerns and has assured me that this will be a bipartisan process, and the Democrats will be at the table. I look forward to our discussions, and I am hopeful that we can develop a final product that everyone on our committee can support.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 456—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE ON THE DISCUSSION BY THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL OF SECURE, SUSTAINABLE, AND RELIABLE SOURCES OF ENERGY

Mr. LUGAR submitted the following resolution, which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 456

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) the President should place on the agenda for discussion at the North Atlantic Council, as soon as practicable, the merits of establishing a policy and strategy for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to promote the security of members of the Organization through the development of secure, sustainable, and reliable sources of energy; and

(2) the President should submit to Congress a report that sets forth—

(A) the actions the United States has taken to place the matter referred to in

paragraph (1) on the agenda for discussion at the North Atlantic Council;

(B) the position of the United States on the matter, as communicated to the North Atlantic Council by the representatives of the United States to the Council;

(C) a summary of the debate on the matter at the North Atlantic Council, including any decision that has been reached with respect to the matter by the Council; and

(D) a strategy for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to develop secure, sustainable, and reliable sources of energy, including contingency plans if current energy resources are put at risk.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I rise today to submit a resolution that calls upon the United States to lead the discussion at NATO headquarters of the role the alliance could play in energy security. It further calls upon the President to submit to Congress a report that details "a strategy for NATO to develop secure, sustainable, and reliable sources of energy, including contingency plans if current energy resources are put at risk."

NATO is now facing new challenges and new priorities. To be fully relevant to the security and well-being of the people of its member nations, NATO must think and act globally.

International developments are calling attention to the growing importance of energy security for NATO member countries and other non-member partners. Dependence on imports of oil and natural gas from limited numbers of countries with state-controlled reserves makes NATO member countries vulnerable to political manipulation of supply. On a global scale, increased competition for finite supplies of oil and gas could lead to conflict that would directly involve NATO member states. This is why the resolution urges that the United States energy security message to NATO members include attention toward sustainable fuels and preparedness for supply disruption.

As the alliance focuses on a clearer definition of its purpose in the 21st century, I believe that it is important to show congressional support for NATO playing a role in energy security.

SENATE RESOLUTION 457—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT THE CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAVE SERIOUS CONCERNS REGARDING THE RELEASE OF CONVICTED TERRORIST AND MURDERER MOHAMMAD ALI HAMMADI BY THE GOVERNMENT OF GERMANY

Mr. VITTER (for himself, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. DEMINT, Mr. CRAIG, and Mr. ISAKSON) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 457

Whereas, although the Government of Germany has been a significant partner in combating international terrorism, their release of Mohammad Ali Hammadi was a grave and unfortunate mistake;